

George W. Dashiell Building  
1203 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-<sup>432</sup>~~352~~

HABS  
DC  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. DC-<sup>432</sup>~~352~~

## GEORGE W. DASHIELL BUILDING

Location: 1203 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington,  
District of Columbia.

USGS: Washington West Quadrangle, UTM Coordinates  
18.324070.4306890.

Present Owner: Cabot, Cabot and Forbes Co, 60 State St., Boston,  
Massachusetts 02109.

Present Occupant/Use: Vacant; scheduled to be demolished 1979.

Significance: The building is located within the Pennsylvania  
Avenue National Historic Site and contributes to  
the small-scale commercial streetscape of the  
block. Constructed ca. 1823, the building is one  
of the earlier structures in the district.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: circa 1823. In 1819 the General Assessment Records show no improvement on that part of Lot 1 which became Lot 801 (1203 Pennsylvania Avenue), but in 1824 the records show the 2,000 sq. ft. of land purchased by George W. Dashiell assessed at \$1,000 along with an assessment for improvements of \$2,000. For the rest of the century, the valuation of the improvements remained fairly constant, while the valuation of the land rose substantially, so that by 1890, for example, the land was valued at \$12,000, while the improvements were still valued at \$2,000.
2. Original and subsequent owners:
  - 1819 William Reily is listed in the General Assessment as owner of lot 1.
  - 1824 George W. Dashiell is listed as the owner of 2000 square feet of lot 1, the lot that became 1203 Pennsylvania Ave.
  - 1830 Mary D. Talbott is listed in the assessment records as the owner of this lot.
  - 1838 John France buys the property from Mary D. Talbott for \$3,000 (April 16, 1838, recorded August 14, 1838, Liber WB 68, new folio 288).
  - 1926 Johanna Young acquires the property from John France et ux. et al. (Deed 5862-195, recorded April 11, 1926)

By this time, the property was administered by one of John France's heirs, probably by Kate Thompson, who may have been the remarried wife or the married daughter of John France. These speculations are supported by the following: (1) in 1866 the original 1838 deed was mailed to John France in Baltimore, MD.; (2) Building Permit No. 6,489 dated February 11, 1926, shows Mrs. Kate Thompson, Baltimore, Md.; (3) Kate Thompson is given as the owner of 1203 Pennsylvania Avenue on almost all deeds and leases from 1904 to 1926 and also appears on some with earlier dates. Plate 13 of Hopkin's Plats for the City of Washington in 1887 has "J. France" inscribed on the 1203 lot, indicating that it was then known by that name.

- 1930 Robert A. Krieger et ux. acquire the property from Johanna Young (Deed 6427-452, recorded March 14, 1930)
  - 1931 Christian Heurich is listed in the assessment records as the owner.
  - 1935 Amelia Heurich is listed in the assessment records as the owner.
  - 1937 Christian Heurich is listed in the assessment records as the owner.
  - 1965 Under the will of Christian Heurich, his property is granted in fee simple to Christian Heurich Jr., Anita Heurich Eckles, and Karla Heurich King (Deed 12,410-116, recorded May 13, 1965)
3. Original plan and construction: It is not known whether the original building was for single family use or whether it offered direct access to the upper floors from the street, so that the second and third floors could be leased separately. The pressed-brick facade and galvanized iron window hoods of the third floor appear to be additions dating from the late nineteenth century.
4. Alterations and additions:
- In 1879, Frank Hagerty, listing himself as "owner," obtained a permit to make general repairs in the amount of \$350 to "one brick building between 12th and 13th Streets on Pa. Ave., N.W." (Permit No. 310 dated September 4, 1879).

In 1881, G.W. Campbell, contractor, again giving Frank Hagerty as the "owner," applied for a permit "to build a stand projecting 5'-6" at a cost of 30.00 for materials and framing." This was probably used as a reviewing stand for President James Garfield's inaugural parade (Permit No. 860 dated March 1, 1881).

Again in 1882 Frank Hagerty obtained a permit "to remodel and repair" a brick structure occupied as a restaurant (Repair Permit No. 140 dated July 27, 1882).

A permit to build a one-story addition to the rear of 1203 Pennsylvania Avenue was requested in the name of owner John Frances (sic) by contractor J.N. Macpherson in 1907 (Permit No. 812, dated September 4, 1907). This permit marks the beginning of a series of major changes in the 1203 property. On this particular job, the building inspector notes for September and October 1907 indicate that the contractor did not adhere to the plans because he was ordered to take down a completed wall and rebuild it 13" wide as specified, was required to build a fire wall 12" over the roof, and finally on October 23, 1907, had to remove brick from the alley after completing the addition.

In 1911, Adolph Loehl "lessee of Mrs. Kate Thompson," applied for a permit "to build one story back room rear of lot as shown on plans of brick." The architect and contractor was W.A. Tolland, the estimated cost \$100. Copies of the application, the plat and freehand sketches of the original plans are part of Repair Permit No. 3,016 dated December 15, 1911.

Probably before the new wine room was completed, a new application was filed for extensive alterations having an estimated cost of \$2,395. Oscar G. Vogt, with offices in the Corcoran Building, was the architect, and the contractor was Burgess and Parsons. The application and plans show the facade of 1203 was to be extensively altered. (Repair Permit No. 3,183 dated December 30, 1911).

Continuing with his major changes in the 1203 building, Adolph Loehl submitted a new permit application in March 1912 to remodel the 2nd and 3rd floors at the rear of 1203. From the fact that the permit mentions a new dumbwaiter, it may be inferred that the upper floors were also being used as part of the restaurant. This impression is strengthened by the following: "Connect a walk over the roof of new building and connect with rear yard via stairway for service." (Repair Permit No. 4,158 dated March 18, 1912).

Permit No. 793, dated August 28, 1918, described the structure in question as a one-room brick building with a tin roof, 18' x 14' and one story high. From this it may be inferred that the renovations were to be made to one of the structures attached to the rear of 1203. The permit lists Kate Thompson as owner and gives the G.C. Loehler Co. as the architect. "How occupied" is answered "store". At an estimated cost of \$1,290 the following improvements were to be made: "Altering furnace and toilet rooms by removing old toilet fixtures and properly capping sewers, laying wooden floor and raising roof 2'-0", building brick enclosure for heater and taking down present rear wall, enlarging footing and erecting a 13" wall."

In 1921 Jesse L. Heiskill, agent for owner (not listed), applied for a permit to erect a canvas covered drop awning and stated the building was occupied for "army supplies". (Permit No. 5,216 dated March 22, 1921).

Two month before she was to sell 1203 Pennsylvania Avenue, owner Kate Thompson, Baltimore, Md., had to apply for a repair permit to replace losses due to fire at an estimated cost of \$6,000. In a letter following the permit application, the date of the fire is given as January 14, 1926, and it is stated that the building was not more than 50% damaged, although the roof was badly burned and the top floor and back stairs were damaged. According to the permit application, the rear rafters, studding, stairway from the first to third floor and burnt flooring were to be replaced and an asphalt roof installed (Repair Permit No. 6,489, February 11, 1926).

In 1931 applicant Galen J. Boyer obtained a permit (No. 143,663, dated June 19, 1931) to install a refrigeration system for a luncheonette consisting of one Frigidaire unit in the basement.

Christian Heurich, Jr., acting as the realty company agent, applied for a repair permit in 1934 to "repair roof over shed, rear yard, connect same to main building and build cold storage room." The shed was to have a tin roof (Repair Permit No. 170,154, dated April 5, 1934).

Repair Permit No. 197,371, November 13, 1936, states "Amelia L. Heurich has permission to remove show windows and install flat windows as per plans."

Also in 1936 the Eagle Restaurant applied to install refrigeration at an estimated cost of \$150 to be provided by a system using methyl coolant, copper piping, and having one compressor in the basement (Refrigeration Permit No. 198,280, February 18, 1936).

In 1937 owner Mrs. Christian Heurich applied for a "permit to erect temporary stand to seat 35 persons on the inside of building on 2nd floor for 1937 inaugural parade" (of Franklin Roosevelt). (Permit No. 198,919, dated January 18, 1937).

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The earliest mention of occupants of this building that was found was the caption accompanying Preocctor's September 21, 1930, Washington Star article: "1203 Pennsylvania Avenue, where W.H. Ottman conducted a saloon in 1875." And, in fact, the early term "saloon" and later terms "cafe" and "restaurant" reflect the prevailing use of 1203 from the late nineteenth century through the early 1970s. At the time W.H. Ottman was running his saloon, Frank Hagerty was starting a restaurant at 454 D Street across from the older City Hall. By 1879 and again in 1881 Building Permit Records showed Frank Hagerty as the "owner" of 1203 Pennsylvania Avenue. City Directories for 1880-1882 list "Frank Hagerty, restaurant/saloon, 1203 Penn. Ave." In 1883 and 1884 David Hagerty is listed as running a restaurant and selling liquors at 1203. Kate Thompson leased to David Hagerty in 1889 (Lease 1449-299, recorded December 28, 1889), but in 1890 she leased to Dennis Crowley (Lease 1,494, recorded June 12, 1890). A 1907 Building Permit indicated that 1203 continued to be used as a cafe.

From 1904 to about 1917 Kate Thompson leased to a John J. Meehan (Lease 2,884-13, recorded October 22, 1904; Lease 3,438-437, recorded October 19, 1911; and Lease 3,483-371, recorded December 14, 1911). Mr. Meehan does not appear on other records and his tenancy overlaps that of Adolph Loehl who, according to Building Permit Records, was actively engaged in extensive remodeling of his restaurant/saloon during this period. Adolph Loehl's alterations -- a wine room in December, 1911, later that month plans for elaborate alterations to the facade including a new marquee, and additions to the rear of the building, particularly the second and third floors -- show that the entire building was used as a restaurant. The 1914 City Directory lists "Adolph Loehl, saloon, 1203 Penn. Ave."

In 1917 Kate Thompson leased to Lem Towers, then the owner of 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue (Lease 4,027-427, recorded December 18, 1917).

The use of the building changed in 1920 when a Building Permit shows that it was occupied by a store. City Directories and Building Permits reveal that the Army Supply Co. occupied the premises from 1920 to at least 1924, apparently selling uniforms and equipment from World War I. A Mrs. Mina Degen is also listed in the City Directory as a tenant in 1920. The dentist, Wilbur E. Evans, who had had his offices at 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, moved to 1203 in 1920 (Lease 4,367-320, recorded June 5, 1920) and was still there in 1924 (City Directory).

By 1927, perhaps as the result of a 1926 fire, 1203 Pennsylvania Avenue was vacant; it remained vacant until 1930, according to the City Directories, when William and Gertrude Gildenhorn established the Capitol Men's Shop. In 1931 Galen J. Boyer installed refrigeration equipment for a luncheonette, while the City Directories listed the Capitol Men's Shop at 1203 until 1932, indicating that the Gildenhorns may have occupied one of the upper floors. In 1932 the Lincoln Bus Line and in 1933 the Central Union Bus Line had offices at 1203 Pennsylvania Avenue.

In 1934 the premises returned to their traditional use as Albert T. Bean was operating the Eagle Restaurant. Mr. Bean's restaurant was listed in the 1943 City Directory, but by 1948 was sharing the building with the Twelve-0-Three Bar and Grill, a tenant until the early 1970s. Menus and signs found on the second floor of the 1203 building give the name as Bob Seidel's 1203 Restaurant and indicate that the "Elbow Room" was an upstairs club. A small stage is still evident at the back of the second floor, and there is an area at the right rear which may have served as a small bar.

In an interview, Mr. Washbaugh, Manager of the Washington Garage Co., which has leased the property for a number of years, stated that he recalls going upstairs at 1203 Pennsylvania Avenue to collect rent from a palm reader who was the last tenant on the upper floors, renting for about six to eight years in the 1960s.

A trust security agreement (Agreement 13,543-425, recorded October 1, 1973) probably indicates the point at which the last occupant, Stein's Shoe Repair Co., Inc., began leasing 1203 Pennsylvania Avenue.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old view: Washington Star, September 21, 1930. Photograph #6763, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Washington, D.C.
2. Partial elevation (first two floors), Oscar G. Vogt, architect. Attached to Application for Permit to Repair No. 3183, December 30, 1911.

3. Land Records, District of Columbia
4. District of Columbia Building Permit Records 1877-1949 and District of Columbia General Assessment Records 1819-1879, National Archives, Civil Division, Legislative and Natural Resources Branch, Record Group 351.
5. District of Columbia General Assessment Records 1889-present and Polk's Washington City Directories, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Washington, D.C.
6. Interviews with former tenants.

Prepared by: Bill Noble of Cabot, Cabot  
and Forbes Co.  
for Pennsylvania Avenue  
Development Corporation  
Summer, 1979

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This building, retaining the small scale and brick dogtooth cornice reflective of its 1820s construction date, has been repeatedly altered so as to lose much of its integrity.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The three-story building measures 20' (three-bay front) x 65'.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: The walls are of load-bearing brick masonry construction. The third-floor front facade has a facing of red pressed brick. The first- and second-floor front facades are covered with wood ornamentation and fenestration surrounds.
4. Structural system: All roof and floor framing is of wood and is supported by the party walls.
5. Chimneys: The brick chimney at the western party wall rises 3' above the roof of the neighboring building.



6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: there are two doors, dating from the twentieth century, on the front facade. One is between the two show windows and the other is on the eastern end.
- b. Windows: The ground floor storefront contains two fixed plate glass windows. The second and third floor window openings contain wooden one-over-one light double-hung sash. Each of the third floor window openings is embellished with a galvanized iron hood and has a wood sill.

The second-floor windows are set in a Classically influenced molded wood facade with a cornice between the second and third floors. Between the windows and at the ends are four hooks which had been used to support the marquee.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape covering: The gable roof is covered with terne or tin-plated iron installed with a standing seam.
- b. Cornice: A dogtooth cornice in brick is visible under the eaves.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The first floor is essentially one open space. The second and third floors have three spaces located one behind the other and connected by double doors. Bathrooms and other smaller spaces are located at the stair landings and at the head of the stairs.
2. Stairways: The stairway, located at the southeast corner of the building, is accessible both from the exterior and from the interior of the first floor.
3. Flooring: Asphalt flooring is used throughout the building, although wood strip flooring undoubtedly exists under the asphalt floor on the upper floors. Concrete appears to have been installed in some areas of the first floor store area.
4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Pressed metal ceilings are used on the first floor ceiling and at the second floor ceiling of the stairway. Painted plaster is used on a majority of the other wall and ceiling surfaces throughout the building.

5. Doorways and doors: The majority of the doorways and doors throughout the building are undistinguished except for two pairs of panelled double doors with interesting door frames on the second floor.

Prepared by John Hecker of David McLaren  
Hart & Associates  
for the Pennsylvania Avenue  
Development Corporation  
Summer, 1979

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC) in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort in the demolition of buildings in Square 291. John A. Burns, AIA, was the HABS project coordinator. The historical information was prepared by Bill Noble of Cabot, Cabot and Forbes for PADC, and the architectural description was prepared by John Hecker of David McLaren Hart and Associates for PADC. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal by Alison K. Hoagland, an architectural historian in the HABS office in October, 1979. Photographs were taken by Barry Brooks in April 1979.